THE DAN AND PATRICIA JORNDT FOUNDATION

Joy of Learning Scholarships

and

Joy of Teaching Awards

May 14, 2020

Amundsen High School
5110 N. Damen Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
2020 Jorndt Award Virtual Assembly and Ceremony
Amundsen High School
5110 N. Damen Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Dr. Janice Jackson
CPS Chief Executive Officer

LaTanya McDade
CPS Chief Educational Officer

Anna Pavichevich
Principal

Kristi Eilers
Minh Nguyen
Cybill Ortiz
Assistant Principals

Daniel and Patricia Jorndt
Benefactors

John and Jan Puoci
Bob Delaney
Honored Guests
The Dan and Patricia Jorndt Foundation
Award Assembly and Ceremony, May 14, 2020

Opening Remarks ................................................................. Anna Pavichevich, Principal

Presentation of Joy of Teaching Awards ...........................................L. Daniel & Patricia Jorndt, Grantors

Joy of Teaching Award Winners
John Evans
Laura Frcka
Christian Pedersen

Presentation of Joy of Learning Scholarship......................................L. Daniel & Patricia Jorndt, Grantors

Joy of Learning Scholarship Winners
Qawiyyah Akanni
Ulrika Braemus
Nicole Dano
Alondra Espinoza
Cindy Orogbu
Maria Popoca

Presentation of Principal Award.....................................................L. Daniel & Patricia Jorndt Grantors
The Dan and Patricia Jorndt Foundation

“Joy of Learning” & “Joy of Teaching” Awards

Dan Jorndt is a 1959 graduate of Amundsen High School and the former CEO of The Walgreen Company. His father, Louis C. Jorndt, was a teacher and coach at Amundsen High School for more than two decades and a 43-year employee of the Chicago Public Schools. The annual *Joy of Learning* and *Joy of Teaching* awards honor the legacy of Louis C. Jorndt and other members of the Jorndt family who have chosen careers in education.

Each year, three staff members are recognized for consistently providing excellent instruction, as well as for making a positive impact in the Amundsen community, particularly as related to filling a critical need in the areas of academics, social-emotional learning, climate and culture, parent relationships, and community engagement. Each of the three winning staff members will receive funds to further their work, as well as for personal use. Six outstanding graduating students will receive scholarship money based on scholarship, leadership qualities, and financial need. Dan and Patricia Jorndt also provide the principal with an annual monetary contribution to promote overall school improvement.

The idea for this annual awards ceremony began on November 4, 1999, when Dan and Patricia Jorndt announced the donation of $1 million to fund scholarships for graduating seniors, as well as grants for teachers at Amundsen High School. The *Joy of Learning* and *Joy of Teaching* awards remain one of the largest of its type to a single school in the Chicago Public Schools. To date, Dan and Patricia Jorndt have contributed well over $1.5 million in financial awards to Amundsen students and staff. In 2004, the Jorndt family generously donated $1.2 million toward the renovation of the football stadium in Winnemac Park, which was rededicated as *Jorndt Field*. In 2018, the Jorndts made a second donation of $1 million for an artificial turf football field and new track. Through the generous contribution of Dan and Patricia Jorndt, the legacy of Louis C. Jorndt will be enjoyed by future generations of athletes and spectators alike.

The Amundsen High School community wishes to express its sincere gratitude to Dan and Patricia Jorndt for their continued and extraordinary generosity. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the award recipients for achieving excellence in learning, teaching, and service.
Jorndt Joy of Teaching

**John Evans**

John Evans was born and raised just north of Chicago in a family that valued education above all else. In his early teens he knew he would become a high school teacher - a dream and a calling that Amundsen High School would help him realize in his late twenties. For the last sixteen years Amundsen has been a home away from home. Through teaching, coaching and professional learning Mr. Evans has given his time, passion and energy to all things Amundsen. Watching students and athletes succeed in the classroom and on the field was the only motivation he had.

In recent years, Amundsen helped transform him in ways he couldn’t have imagined. After meeting his wife at Amundsen in 2013, they expanded their family to include a beautiful baby girl in 2019. Now, he works even more diligently, to make his own family proud. Every victory at Amundsen is now one for his students, himself, and his family at home to share.

**Laura Frcka**

Laura Frcka graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a major in Mathematics and a minor in English as an International Language. With a passion to teach in the city, she joined the Chicago Teaching Fellowship and received a Master of Art in Teaching degree from National Louis University. Fourteen years ago, Ms. Frcka began her teaching career in Chicago Public Schools. She taught at Clemente High School, Bogan Computer Technical High School, and now, her forever school, Amundsen High School. As a proud member of the MSU-Wipro STEM and Leadership Fellowship Cohort 2, she focused on learning more about growth mindset and problem based learning. She is also a Google Certified Educator Level 2 and an ASPEN Change Champion.

Ms. Frcka met her husband, Jeff, a Physical Education teacher, while teaching at Clemente High School. They live near Amundsen High School where they are raising their three children: Josephine (6), George (4), and Catherine (2 months). Outside of the classroom, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, gardening, running, and baking. During the summer, you can find Ms. Frcka in her garden or playing outside with her children. The teaching profession was a natural one for Laura Frcka with her passion for learning and helping others. She also
comes from a long line of educators including her mother, grandparents, and 4th great aunt, Laura B. Sprague, who was the first school teacher in Lake County, Illinois in 1836.

**Chris Pedersen**

Chris Pedersen was raised in a two bedroom apartment in the Avondale/Logan Square neighborhood in Chicago. He is the oldest of 3. He is married and has three boys, ages 6, 4, and 9 months old.

He learned to swim at Kosciuszko Park, and, at 12 years ol, he took his first job was a learn-to-swim instructor. From that point on he taught ages 4-18. When he turned 16, he started lifeguarding for local pools and the park district. It was early when he realized he had a knack and passion for teaching. After graduating college, he joined the U.S. Coast Guard where he spent 13 years and finished as a Marine Science and Safety Technician, First Class.

Simultaneously, at the age 22, he stepped into the high school classroom as a first year teacher at North-Grand High School, where he spent 6 years teaching English, Political Science, and AVID. In 2010, Pedersen was hired at Amundsen High School as an AVID and English Teacher, however, would go on to take many more roles at Amundsen that would help to develop him as a leader.

Since working at Amundsen, he has been a teacher, coach (basketball, football, waterpolo), Chicago Teachers Union Delegate, Parent Advisory Council Liaison, LSC Teacher Representative, Behavior Health Team Lead, Restorative Justice Coordinator, and Title IX school compliance official. He currently works with Ms. Ortiz, Mr. Javier, Ms. Gerena, and the School Resource Officers in the Restorative Justice Office and loves his role, and the staff and students at Amundsen High School.
Jorndt Joy of Learning

Qawiyyah Akanni

As a child growing up in Chicago, a very diverse city, Qawiyyah Akanni has loved getting to know people from different cultures and backgrounds. Apart from loving to meet new people, she enjoys being open-minded, expanding her views, and exploring new places. Being a first-generation daughter to Nigerian immigrants has taught her the importance of going to college and furthering her studies. She has decided to continue her education at Boston University, as they have opportunities for her to experience all of these things. During her time at Amundsen, she has participated in numerous clubs and activities, but her favorite is playing viola in the Honors Chamber Orchestra Ensemble. She feels that it serves as both an exhilarator and a de-stressor. She hopes to continue her love for playing as a violist in one of Boston’s symphony orchestras.

At Boston University, Qawiyyah plans on majoring in Human Physiology as it is something that she finds very fascinating. She aims to use this degree to either attend medical school and become an OB/GYN specializing in multiple-birth deliveries or graduate school and become a Certified Nurse Midwife. Qawiyyah also wants to minor in Spanish. She hopes to study abroad in a Spanish-speaking country to practice her linguistic skills and widen her linguistic knowledge while exploring the country’s different cultural traditions. Outside of school, she likes to hang out with friends, engross herself in an online novel, and bake foods to satisfy her sweet tooth.

Ulrika Brameus

Ulrika Brameus moved to Amundsen from Texas, during her junior year. Transferring schools in the middle of one’s high school journey was not an easy feat, but through her dedication to Amundsen, reflected through her positions of co-president of Best Buddies, treasurer of the National Honor Society, and captains of both the varsity swim and water polo teams, it can be said that Ulrika has made the best of her transition and flourished at Amundsen. Ulrika has been a student in the IB Programme at both her old school and at Amundsen. She took on the challenge of the Diploma Programme during her junior and senior year. Despite the rigorous curriculum, Ulrika’s hard work ethic and passion for learning are seen through her earning a spot on the Honor Roll every semester. Ulrika plans on attending Boston University to study political science, with her ultimate goal being to help as many people as she can in the future by working with NGOs, charities, and nonprofits. Ulrika’s goals are to always show her selflessness, unless, of course, she is playing in a water polo game, in which she will play rough. Ulrika is super excited to continue her academic journey and to further discover and develop her joy of learning as a Terrier.
Nicole Dano
Nicole Angelica Dano is an aspiring physical therapist who will be studying at the University of Illinois at Chicago this fall. She is passionate about helping people in need. In the future, she wishes to open up a center for different kinds of therapy. She wants to have a place where all people in need for help can come and possibly even help each other out. Nicole came to Amundsen as a scared freshman and will be leaving as a confident, poised, and outgoing young lady. Nicole has been an active participant in the Amundsen community. Cheerleading, track, Girls Dyson Engineering Club and helping with Special Olympics have shaped her into the young lady she is today. Nicole and a couple girls started the Girls Dyson Engineering Club her freshman year and were able to work with Dyson and visit their offices. She is also a Chicago Ideas Ambassador and got the chance to speak on stage at the Harris theater during Chicago Ideas week. Nicole also loved growing friendships with the cluster program at Amundsen. These extracurriculars helped Nicole become more confident. Nicole has made tremendous personal growth because of the opportunities she had. She wants everyone to take advantage of the resources around them because that is what has certainly helped her. This is only the start of her wonderful journey and she aspires to keep learning and pursue her dreams. Nicole will keep challenging herself academically and will push herself to be the best woman she can be.

Alondra Espinoza
Alondra is the youngest of 5 siblings. She is of Ecuadorian heritage but born and raised in Chicago. She was on the Amundsen Dance Team for all 4 years. She, along with her other friends, founded the Dyson Engineering Girls Club their freshman year; this was one of her high school activities that sparked her interest in STEM. She plans to go to Malcolm X College to study Human Development and Family Studies, after which she plans to transfer to finish her degree. In the future she plans to work with women and young children in social work and counseling. She also plans to start her own foundation to inspire and empower young women to be more involved in the STEM fields and consider them as potential career paths in the future. She hopes to be an inspiration for many others like her, to follow their dreams and be persistent when things get tough.
Cindy Orogbu

Cindy Ugonna Orogbu has gained confidence and determination throughout her high school career. Whether it involved school, friends, family, or life in general, she was incapable of giving up. When Cindy came to Amundsen she was scared and nervous but she changed and became a confident woman. Now she has been thriving in her academics and involvement at Amundsen High School such as Student Activity Committee, African Club, Volleyball, and so much more. Amundsen has groomed her to reach opportunities around her and she will do so in the future as she pursues her future career of becoming a physician assistant. Cindy’s innermost passion grew instantly each time her mom took her to the health care center and she became amazed by the workers who helped people. She worked with After School Matters, specifically Northside Mentors in Training, for two summers where she loved working and engaging with kids. She helped organize activities and how to communicate and engage with the kids. Cindy also worked as one of the coaches for Amundsen’s Softball Clinic. She knew that she wanted to work with kids as a profession. Cindy aims for greatness and hopes to make a difference in people’s lives including her younger siblings who look up to her. She strives to be the best version of herself. She believes that attending Illinois State University this fall would lead her down a successful path as a strong, independent woman ready to take on the world.

Maria Popoca

Maria Popoca is a 2020 graduate of Amundsen High School. She is the first generation in her family to go to college. Maria will be attending the University of Illinois at Chicago to further her education in Computer Science and Business this fall. Her goal is to obtain a Bachelor’s in Computer Science. She hopes to travel the world and experience different cultures while furthering her knowledge of Business Management. Maria hopes to obtain a Master’s in Business Administration one day. One of Maria’s hobbies is to go out and try new cuisine at different restaurants with her friends. Her favorite quote is “if you really want something, you will find a way”. Maria had many obstacles that she had to overcome in her life and that taught her how to persevere and never give up. This has helped her become better every day. Her aspirations are to become financially stable and be an independent woman, who can be a role model for her family members. She is proud of always trying to overcome any obstacles and gives her best in everything she does.